You ask that co-operative societies be required to return members to this Assembly and to the Legislative Council. As far as I can make out, no special representation is required as regards this Assembly because the cause of co-operation has already been amply and powerfully represented here. In regard to the Legislative Council, I have no doubt that that point will come up if and when the Council is re-constituted and its electoral rules are re-modelled. As things stand, there is no possibility of meeting your suggestion. All the other points of your speech will be noted and carefully considered.

58. Means of communication in, and the economic condition of, Travancore.

MR. N. K. PADMANABHA PILLAI (*Member, Neyyattinkara taluk, Group I*) in congratulating the Government for the preparation of the Statement of Action taken on the representations made at the previous session of the Assembly, said that it would have been better if the statement had been placed earlier in the hands of the members as that would prevent repetition of subjects represented last year.

Passing on to his subject, he said that it was his aim to bring to the pointed notice of the Government that the principle to be adopted in carrying out public works should be that the works which benefited the people at large should have preference to others which benefited only a section of the people. If that principle be accepted, the Government would realise that there were pressing public works more urgently required than the proposed railways. Railways would be an urgent necessity in a country where trade and industry had already developed to the utmost possible extent. In Travancore, trade and industry had developed only to the extent that they attained in Europe in the fifteenth century. So far as communications in Travancore were concerned, roads were a greater and far more urgent necessity than railways. For transport of goods, there were canals from one end of the State to the other. Better means of communication would become necessary only when the economic condition of the people improved. For the improvement of the economic condition, cottage industries and agriculture should be encouraged.

During the past fifty years, the Government were not evincing interest in the restoration of irrigation channels, *chiras*, tanks, bridges, culverts and roads situated in the rural areas. For want of proper attention, many channels, *chiras* and tanks had been rendered useless to the public and had been declared as *porambokes*. Many of such *porambokes* were also sold by the Government.

Agriculturists mostly lived in rural areas and the economic condition of the State depended on their prosperity. But the major portion of the allotment for public works was spent on the towns and in the planting districts. That had discouraged the people living in rural areas and left them helpless. Many of them migrated to towns or the planting districts. To improve such a deplorable state of affairs, the Government should try to open up the country and earmark at least 80 per cent. of the allotments for public works during the next ten years for improving the means of communication there. Expenditure on account of the luxurious improvements of towns and big buildings for schools and colleges should be stopped for the time being. An adequate number of roads should first be opened in rural areas for affording facilities for transport of manure to the fields. Irrigation tanks should be repaired or opened wherever necessary. Grazing blocks should be preserved intact without being registered away.

In reserved forests and in the interior taluks, there were still large extents of land available for paddy cultivation. But they were inaccessible and consequently people were not attracted towards such lands. If the necessary roads and irrigation channels be opened, the area under paddy cultivation would gradually increase year by year and ultimately there would be no need for importing any paddy from outside.

Roads and canals were necessary in every taluk. It was a source of consolation that a major portion of the allotment in the Public Works budget was spent on roads and irrigation *maramath* in 1101. But a settled programme of work for improving the agricultural needs of the rural areas was necessary. It was only the adoption of such a policy that would remove the evils of unemployment and discontentment among the people.

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The proposed railway scheme was not necessary for a State like Travancore. It was inaugurated in the interests of a few local representatives and influential traders. The proposal to register a large extent of land was also a direct result of the railway scheme and intended to raise the necessary funds. There was absolutely no need for raising such funds from foreigners in view of the fact that the financial transactions in the year 1101 resulted in a surplus of Rs. 23 lakhs.

Instead of finding new means of transport, it would be well to regulate the existing means. The increase of motor vehicles in the State had affected the safety of the people, besides draining away from the country a large portion of the people's money. There was every convenience for travelling from one part of the State to the other by means of motor cars. But the fares were changed according to the whims and fancies of the owners. The fares should be regulated.

In conclusion, the member once again prayed that the proposed railway scheme should be dropped and that adequate amounts should be spent annually for the improvement of existing roads and the construction of new ones useful to the people at large.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Padmanabha Pillai, you entered into the question as to the relative merits of roads, railways and motor cars which is a very large question and if you and I were to debate it, I am afraid, no other member will have chance to say anything for the next few days. Therefore, I commend you to study some literature on the subject. Recently, a most informative and valuable monograph was published on the subject of the economic value of roads in relation to railways, having specific reference to South Indian conditions. If you will ask the Chief Secretary, he will give you the title of the work and the place wherefrom you can get it. It is a very instructive and exceedingly interesting work to read. All the other points that you took up, except one, I propose to make a note of and look into.

The one point that I am going to refer to immediately is your suggestion that the Statement of Action taken on the last year's representations would be very much more helpful to the members if it were placed in their hands some time before the Assembly met. It is a good suggestion and I am in full sympathy with it. But this is the first time that this has been prepared and let me tell you that the amount of work it threw upon the Secretariat was very great. To prepare these 82 pages dealing with 188 main heads with numerous sub-heads of subjects is not a thing that could be accomplished quite easily. It is indeed a matter for congratulation and I congratulate my Secretariat that they were able to turn this out and have it ready the day before this Assembly met.

59. Administration of the Public Works Department

MR. NARAYANA PILLAI KRISHNA PILLAI (*Member, Kunnatnad taluk, Group I*) spoke about the defects in, and the manner of carrying out of, public works. It was not uncommon for the Public Works Department to carry on a particular work without getting sanction for its estimate. There was a vast difference between the estimated amounts and the actual amounts spent, in several cases. That was due to inaccurate estimation. Ordinarily, no work was completed without two or three revised estimates ; and when completed, the actual amount spent was double the originally estimated amount. The officers did not obviously pay much attention to estimating. It was only when there was pressure from the higher authorities that the subordinate officers submitted a revised estimate. Sometimes the revised estimates were sent up only along with the completion bills.

There was inordinate delay in the preparation of an estimate and in getting sanction for the same. Such delays could be minimised if the Sub-Division Officers and the Division Officers paid a little more attention to the work and reduced as far as possible unnecessary correspondence.

There was utter confusion in getting works done through contract agency. In his anxiety to get the contract for a particular work for himself, a contractor might offer the lowest tender. But subsequently he might be forced to put in petitions to

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